

# Kirk's boys save the world — again

★ ★ ★ STAR TREK 1V: THE VOYAGE HOME (PG): Albert. Stars William Shatner, Leonard Nimoy, DeForest Kelley.

**Even without further complications Admiral Kirk has quite enough on his plate.**

The Enterprise has been wrecked, Spock is hors de combat and the crew is stuck in space with a court martial hanging over their heads.

Each of the crew members harbors a premonition of impending disaster as they prepare for the journey home to Earth. No ticker-tape parade awaits them — they will return to face charges of disregarding orders, causing the destruction of the Enterprise and various other misdemeanors.

Almost as disconcerting is the fact that they will have to make the journey in a clapped-out Klingon space ship and without the help of Spock.

But in true Trekker tradition, these first difficulties are overcome. Scotty's engineering genius makes the ship spaceworthy and, after a touching shrink session with his mother, Spock is mentally geared enough to make the trip.

It all seems routine enough and, despite Dr "Bones" McCoy's doubts about Spock's motives, goes pretty much according to plan. But, while Kirk's reputation is being tarnished by the Klingon envoy on Earth, another, far greater threat appears from an outer space probe from a hitherto unknown planet which is causing worldwide panic as it explores the earth's oceans.

Because it has the power to neutralise Earth's most sophisticated power sources, the probe does pretty well as much as it likes, but the result of the investigations causes the oceans to rage and the weather pattern to settle on universally cyclonic.

The trouble here is that the probe's signals can only be answered by humpback whales, a species of mammal which disappeared from Earth 300 years ago, back in the latter part of the 20th century.

The only thing to do is for Kirk and his crew to



accelerate to the speed of warp 10, make a slingshot turn around the sun and travel back through time to 1986 where, hopefully, they will be able to bag a couple of whales.

So here we have the 23rd century star-trekkers walking the streets of 1986 San Francisco and trying to pass as everyday Earthlings. It is a measure of the film's tongue-in-cheekiness that they succeed not only in not drawing attention to themselves, but being able to carry out their respective missions with reasonably few problems.

The only real setback is Chekov who has trouble

explaining why he, a Russian, is found wandering around the nerve centre of the aircraft carrier Enterprise just after it has been inexplicably drained of its atomic power.

But all is resolved in satisfactory fashion. Chekov (Walter Koenig) is rescued by Kirk (William Shatner) and McCoy (DeForest Kelley), while Scotty (James Doohan) manages to get a plastic tank made to house the whales.

The whales? Ah, there's another problem; but aided by a 20th century marine biologist, Dr Gillian Taylor (Catherine Hicks), the heist is made.

**ADMIRAL KIRK (William Shatner) stands accused of all sorts of intergalactic crimes by a Klingon envoy in Star Trek IV: the Voyage Home. But in true movie fashion, he manages to vindicate himself and, incidentally, save the world.**

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MACHINE MEN



SATURDAY, DECEMBER 20, 1986

## The Great Weekend

# Kirk and his gang fly again

AT the close of the third *Star Trek* movie two years ago, our over-age space adventurers had painted themselves into a galactic corner.

The good ship *Enterprise* had been destroyed, courageously sacrificed to save Mankind. The crew we had come to know and love over 20 years, through 79 television episodes and three movies, was stranded on Vulcan.

Pointy-eared half-Vulcan Mr Spock (Leonard Nimoy) had been returned to life but, deep in the throes of Vulcan mysticism, was definitely not his old self.

So how, when the call to save Earth comes (as we know it must), will Admiral James Kirk (William Shatner), Scotty (James Doohan), McCoy (DeForest Kelley), Chekov (Walter Koenig), Sulu (George Takei), Uhuru (Michelle Nichols) and Spock manage?

More to the point, how will the film-makers create an acceptable *Star Trek* adventure without the *Enterprise* and with Mr Spock, as McCoy puts it, "not exactly working on all thrusters"?

The answer to both questions is: very well indeed. This fourth film, directed as was the third, by Leonard Nimoy, is the most enjoyable yet.

It is not exactly a send-up — Trekkies

STAR TREK IV:  
THE VOYAGE HOME  
Director: Leonard Nimoy  
(Albert, PG)

★★★

would never stand for that — but tongues are firmly in cheeks for much of the action.

*Star Trek IV* is more lighthearted than any of its predecessors. Mind you, it is not flip-pant. A meaningful message about ecological conservation is basic to the plot, but there is no doubt the solemn, duty-conscious crew of the former *Starship Enterprise*, are not above having a laugh at their own expense.

With the connivance of the cast, director Nimoy and writers Nicholas Meyer, Harve Bennett, Steve Meerson and Peter Krikes, a sense of humor is revealed.

It is one that permits Spock, in his Vulcan robes, with a headband covering the tell-tale ears, to be passed off, in 1986 San Francisco, as a failed hippie.

Or for Chekov, with his Russian accent more pronounced than usual, to create minor interest as he asks passers-by the way to the naval dockyards and the nuclear "wessells".

Or for Dr "Bones" McCoy to talk himself out of an unwilling demonstration of 23rd century medicine in the 20th century.



KIRK and his old band . . . a new adventure.

One of the film's jokes is that, in present-day San Francisco, no one seems surprised by the garb of the incognito visitors from the future who, except for Mr Spock, wear their normal Starship uniforms.

Someone, however, is unkind enough to refer to Kirk and Spock as Robin Hood and Friar Tuck.

Why James Kirk and his crew are in 1986 San Francisco has to do with events in the 23rd century and the need to procure a pair of humpback whales — you guessed it — save Mankind once again.

Unfortunately, the whales have been hunted to extinction by the 21st century, so the

space travellers have to become time travellers.

It is not easy because they do not have the use of the reliable old *Enterprise*, but have to make do with a captured Klingon warship. As every Trekkie knows, the Klingons build a handsome but inferior vessel.

There is nothing inferior, however, about the special effects in *Star Trek IV*. With plenty of practice they are excellent, grand enough to be impressive but not so overwhelming they spoil the fun of an essentially tacky space opera.

And be warned. Do not leave before the end of this film — the final sequence should be balm to every faithful Trekkie's heart.



# Time to Trek on, Vulcans

Time travelling is one thing Leonard Nimoy can handle.

With his pointy ears as Mr Spock, he's been travelling through the galaxies for light years — which in our mortal earth times is quite a stretch.

As round-eared Leonard, he has also been spending hours on television in search of all sorts of wonderful oddities which have cropped up over the years.

So when he and movie producer Harve Bennett sat down to concoct a storyline for the latest Star Trek movie, Len readily had time on his hands.

The two came up with time travel as the basis for Star Trek IV: The Voyage Home.

## Homecoming

And that's just what it is. The crew of the starship Enterprise stops wandering where no man has gone before and goes home to earth in 1986.

The same old crew makes an incongruous sight wandering through San Francisco today after stepping back from tomorrow in the last frontier.

But Star Trek IV, which opened in Brisbane on Thursday at the Albert, is just like the long-running television serial — thor-

## FILMS

By STEVE HOWARD

oughly entertaining as long as you get past the obvious silliness.

Really, it takes more a trip into the imagination than into the 23rd century to get the most out of the Star Trek phenomenon. Leave today behind and let your mind wander.

Once Leonard Nimoy donned his thinking cap to devise the story, he went wild.

He plots the problem of diminishing species. On its own and saying it quickly, that sounds fairly heavy-weight.

But after troubling with tribbles and Klingons, being beamed up and phased out, Spock's no man for trifling.

He heads straight for the oceans and saves the whales — not a new concept but, for spacemen, a new past-time.

## Extinction

Extrapolated to the writers' limits, the extinction of the whales could upset the earth's entire food chain and threaten the existence of the planet Earth.

Put that into Trek-speak and you've got major problems that only Captain Kirk and a part-Vulcan can solve.

As fiction, in fact, the story is quite ingenious.

At the end of Star Trek III: The Search for Spock — which Leonard directed in his first effort behind the camera on a feature film — the Enterprise heroes were heading for home in a captured Klingon space ship, the Enterprise having been destroyed in battle.

Meanwhile an unidentified space probe has entered the solar system, beaming a garbled message towards Earth, cutting off all power and steaming up the oceans in the process.

Some smart work by these quick thinkers of the 23rd century determines that the message is



Kirk (WILLIAM SHATNER) and Spock (LEONARD NIMOY) . . . back to earth in Star Trek IV: The Voyage Home.

in whale talk — but, thanks to the thoughtless folly of man, there are no whales left on earth to respond.

Clearly, if there is no answer, the Earth is going to sizzle.

So Kirk and Co head for the 20th century to beam up a pair of whales to repopulate the whale-less oceans of the future and thus save mankind — again.

Although this Star Trek may be light on in sci-fi expectations, it makes up a great deal in the wit of the screenplay.

## Amazement

Most of it, of course, comes from the amazement and disgust with which the Enterprise crew greets the 20th century.

Obviously, the runaway success of last year's Back to the Future had a bearing on the plot development, but whatever, the ageless players, led by William Shatner, Leonard Nimoy, DeForest Kelley, James Doohan and George Takei, take it all in their stride.

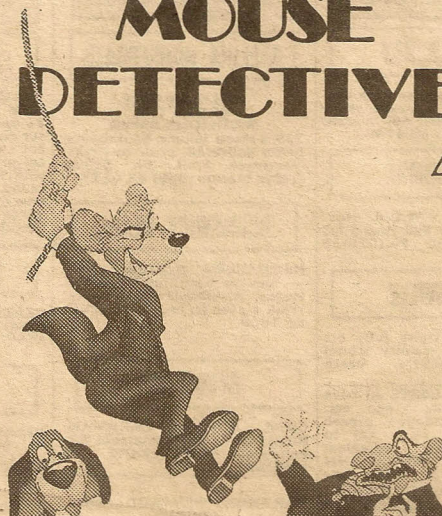
For the legion of Star Trek fans, it's just like having old friends home for Christmas.

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